

Thoughts on Totems and Marriage

English translation:

A: When you marry, it is not allowed to have people of the same totem marrying each other. That is, if my totem is *Shoko*,¹ I cannot marry another person whose totem is *Shoko*. No. Nowadays, some people do it because of ignorance. That is why some marriages are failing, because relatives are marrying each other because they do not know totems.

B: How so?

A: It's like children who live in the city, a boy can approach any girl and ask for the girl's name only and they start dating. Ah and then the parents then say let's go to the rural areas, say a girl might have grown up in the rural areas. They get there and then people ask, "So what is their totem?" Then you realize that ah, the woman is a *dube* and the man is also *dube*. However, they cannot break it [the relationship] when the situation is like that. There is a procedure that is known as *chekaukama*. There is a payment that is made in form of a cow [from the man's side].

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2013 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated

¹ *Shoko* means monkey but in this case it is an example of a totem